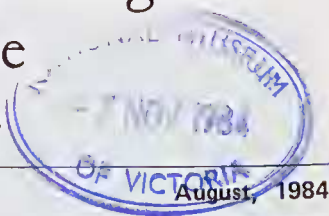


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## THE LIFE HISTORY OF *ELYMNIAS AGONDAS AUSTRALIANA* FRUHSTORFER (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

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### Abstract). Box 184

The life history of the Australian butterfly *Elymnias agondas australiana* Fruhstorfer is described and the food plant reported for the first time.

### Introduction

The palmfly, *Elymnias agondas australiana* Fruhstorfer, is found in rainforest areas from Cape York to Silver Plains (Common and Waterhouse 1981). While examining lawyer vines at Iron Range a pupa was found on *Calamus caryotoides* Mart. (Arecaceae). A male emerged from this and oviposition by females proved *Calamus caryotoides* to be the food plant.

### Life history

*Ovum*. Nearly spherical, smooth, whitish and translucent, 1.4 mm diameter. Deposited singly on the underside of leaves of the food plant.

*First instar larva*. Head brown, with a pair of long horns. Body white, posterior end bearing a pair of long processes. Body segments with long lateral and subdorsal hairs, interspersed with finer hairs. Length (excluding posterior processes) 4 mm, processes 1 mm.

*Third instar larva*. Head brown, with two black, vertical lines meeting the two black, spined horns. Body green, with two pairs of yellow longitudinal lines dorsally, inner pair indistinct, outer pair incorporating yellow spots. Body covered with raised granules. Posterior processes yellow. Length (excluding processes) 16 mm, processes 3 mm.

*Fifth instar larva* (Fig. 1). Head, as in third instar but with white and yellow areas. Body with an additional pair of yellow, indistinct lines laterally, dorsally with blue areas between the pairs of yellow spots. Posterior processes orange. Length (excluding processes) 37 mm, processes 6 mm.

Larvae shelter beneath leaves of the food plant and feed during daylight hours.



Figs 1, 2. *Elymnias agondas australiana*: (1) fifth instar larva with cast of 4th instar partly visible between posterior processes; (2) pupa.

*Pupa* (Fig. 2). Green, with a pair of black and white processes anteriorly. Thoracic ridge yellow with a black and pink area at its apex. Tarnus with two patches of black and pink. Thorax and abdomen with three series of yellow spots dorsally. Pupa suspended by a cremaster beneath a leaf of the food plant. Length 23 mm.

The duration of a life cycle commencing early June was 49 days. Ova hatch in 5 days, larval stage was 34 days, pupal stage 10 days.

#### Reference

Common, I. F. B. and Waterhouse, D. F., 1981. *Butterflies of Australia*. Second edition. Angus and Robertson, Sydney. 682 pp.